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A radio talk by J.B. Kincer, Weather Bureau, delivered in the Department of Agriculture period of the National Farm and Home Hour, broadcast by a network of 48 associate NBC radio stations, Wednesday, April 6, 1932.

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March brought a decided reversal of temperature conditions that have been experienced in the central and eastern United States for nearly a year. With the exception of August, which had, in general, about normal warmth, month after month, since last May, has been abnormally warm. However, early in March, a mass of extremely cold air broke through from the Polar regions in the vicinity of Alaska, and atmospheric pressure in the southeastern United States was favorable for a far-southward sweep of this heavy, cold Polar air. Killing frosts and freezing temperatures penetrated to extreme southern Dixie, with freezing weather to Brownsville, Tex., and killing frosts to the interior of southern Florida.

Last month we called attention to the fact that, normally, the coldest three-month period of the year is from the first of December to the first of March; consequently, this is considered the meteorological winter. We had reference, of course, to normal conditions, and not to what might happen in the present year. The cold wave, coming in the first spring month, after the winter had been persistently warm, was all the more remarkable. March, as a whole, was considerably colder than normal throughout most of the United States, notwithstanding the decidedly warmer weather the latter part of the month. The colder than normal mid-winter temperatures early in March, when vegetation was abnormally advanced, did considerable damage. Hardy truck crops, such as cabbage, celery, turnips, and the like, were set back, but without serious, permanent harm. Nearly all tender vegetation was either killed outright or severely damaged. Also early fruit buds and blooms were hard hit from the Potomac, Ohio, and lower Missouri Rivers, southward to the Gulf, but, fortunately, commercial peach orchards in some important districts of the Southeast came through in good shape, especially in southern Georgia and parts of the Carolinas. Apple buds were harmed only to a limited extent, with material damage confined principally to the western Ohio Valley and the Ozark region of Missouri. Spring oats suffered in much of the South, but winter wheat was less affected, except in some western portions of the main producing belt. Late reports from Nebraska, western Kansas, and some adjoining sections, show definite evidence of considerable harm to wheat, while the continued blowing of soil has added to the injury in Kansas. In the spring Wheat Belt the moisture content of the top soil is now mostly favorable, but preparation for seeding has been slow and very little has yet been planted. The subsoil is still dry in most places and generous late spring and early summer rains will be necessary to insure a favorable spring wheat season.

In the central valleys preparation for corn planting is also rather backward, because March weather was mostly unfavorable for field work, but some corn has been planted locally as far north as southeastern Kansas.. Spring oat seeding is slow, but recent weather has been somewhat more favorable and better progress is now reported, with some put in during the last few days on more favorable soil as far north as Iowa. Cotton planting in the extreme South is now becoming active, with steady progress in Texas and more general advance in the southeastern belt, especially in southern Georgia.

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Potatoes and early gardens are being planted to the central sections of the country, while hardy truck and the replanted, tender varieties are doing well in the more southern States under the influence of the more favorable weather the latter part of the month.

With regard to the livestock situation, conditions since last summer have been decidedly trying in the Central and Northern States of the great western stock area. In the Great Basin, the central and northern Rocky Mountain sections, and the northern Great Plains, but little winter grazing was possible, because of the snow-covered range; there was much cold, stormy weather, and feed was scarce in many places because of last year's drought; consequently, stock suffered much more than normally, and rather widespread losses were reported. The latter part of March and first days of April brought considerable relief, as the opening of the range permitted extensive grazing, but at the same time range grass is limited in most places and supplemental feeding still necessary.

The soil in most of the principal agricultural sections of the country is now well supplied with moisture and in much better shape in this respect than at the end of winter a year ago. Rain would be welcome in Texas, parts of Louisiana, southern Mississippi, and portions of Florida, while moisture is needed in the west-central Great Plains, and the subsoil is still dry in the Northwest. Elsewhere, including the Pacific Northwest, conditions are generally favorable for rapid growth of vegetation with the advent of warm spring weather.